

Bayhealth Partners with Delaware Libraries to Support Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

All babies born at Bayhealth to receive first Imagination Library book

WILMINGTON, Del.— Governor John Carney and the Delaware Division of Libraries announced on Wednesday that Bayhealth has partnered with Dover and Milford Public Libraries to ensure all babies born at Bayhealth Hospitals, as well as any eligible patients of Bayhealth Pediatrics in Milford, are registered for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

This partnership is in support of Governor John Carney's statewide expansion of [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) through Delaware's public libraries. Babies and children who are enrolled in the free Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program receive one new book in the mail each month from birth until their fifth birthday. This helps families create a personal library of up to 60 books at no cost to them, with the goal of establishing a child's early reading experience and habits. Over 13,000 Delaware children from birth to age five receive a new book in the mail every month.

"One of the most important things we can do to improve childhood literacy is to give our children access to books, especially during this challenging time," said **Governor Carney**. "The Imagination Library program is also an important component of the First Chance Delaware initiative for children, led by my wife Tracey, to promote learning readiness

through literacy and parent-child engagement. Thank you to Bayhealth, Dover and Milford Public Libraries, and all of our partners for your work on this important effort.”

Bayhealth joins Beebe Healthcare, which was the first hospital to help expand Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. In October 2020, Beebe Healthcare [partnered](#) with Lewes Public Library to enroll babies born at their facilities in the program.

“Bayhealth is a great addition to our Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library partners,” said **First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney**. “We hope all of our birth hospitals ultimately will be able to implement similar registration programs. Interactive early language exposure is so critical to brain development and to setting kids up for success.”

“Promoting early language skills improves overall literacy and builds strong reading habits. One of the most important things a parent can do to help their child succeed later in school—and in life—is to read to them. We are excited to join this important initiative and to offer this program to all Bayhealth babies as well as any patient of Bayhealth Pediatrics who is under age 5 and not already registered,” said **Bayhealth Pediatrician Colleen Allorto, DO**.

At Bayhealth Hospital, Kent and Sussex Campuses, new babies and their families are registered for the program and given their first Imagination Library book when they are discharged from the hospital. The [first family](#) to receive the book and be registered at Bayhealth Hospital, Kent Campus was James Hamilton, son of Emilie and Robert Hamilton. The [first family](#) to receive the book and be registered at Bayhealth Hospital, Sussex Campus was Phoenix Rose Baisch, daughter of Arynn Jones and George Baisch. At Bayhealth Pediatrics, doctors and nurses educate parents of eligible children about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program and assist with getting them registered as needed.

“The Imagination Library is offered internationally through the Dollywood Foundation and is managed for Delaware by the Division of Libraries. It’s a natural fit for our libraries to partner with the community hospitals to facilitate Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. Early literacy is one of our core missions,” says **Dr. Annie Norman, Director of the Delaware Division of Libraries.**

Information and registration are available [online through Delaware Libraries](#). Books are selected by a national panel of early childhood literacy experts who review hundreds of children’s books each year and choose those that best fit the needs of children as they learn and grow.

“On a personal note, I loved reading to my children every night and want all families to have that opportunity to stimulate their child’s mind,” said **Dr. Allorto**. “Thank you to all the nurses, pediatricians, librarians, and the Dollywood Foundation for helping to bridge the gap on literary success.”

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